# The Love Philtre

*By W. G. Yarcott*

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Conversation had touched upon a fully reported breach of promise case action. Tom, whose quarrel, with his fiancee still burned, sniffed his contempt of the unhappy defendant whose stilted but earnest attempts to express his passion in verse had been basely read out in court by a sardonic counsel.

"Love," he concluded, "an' such-like rot ought to be put a stop to. It makes me ill to talk about it."

"Then why talk of it?" said Mr. Nutts, the druggist. Mr. Nutts' presence was tolerated on the implied understanding that he refrained from insidiously introducing any of his mysterious compounds.

"Why talk of it?" he said again. "Nothing new has been discovered about love since the first generation after Adam. If a chap thinks 'e's in love, an' says he's un'appy, 'e ain't in love at all. Most likely it's indigestion. 'Cause when a chap's really in love, he simply can't help being 'appy."

"Listen to Cupid," said Potty, grinning.

"But look here, Pinch," said Tom, "s'pose a chap's in love with a gal, an' she ain't with him. What about it then?"

"Nothin' at all to do with it," explained Pinch. "Love's a thing by itself, an' if a chap's got it he's happier'n he could be if he ain't got it. If the gal's caught it as well, that's very nice, but even if she ain't, the chap's better off than if he hadn't got it."

"It's my belief," said Potty, memory touching his eyes and voice, "that it's as much habit as anything else. When a chap's got into the way of it like, it ain't easy to get out. It's like smokin'. It don't matter very much what you smoke so long as you're smokin', an' same way it don't matter much to a chap who he's in love with, so long as he's in love."

"Well," said Pinch, "come to think of it, most things is habits. What's life but a sort o' habit? There's lots o' people always grumbling about the worry an' trouble o' life, an' sayin' it ain't worth livin', but they don't seem very keen on givin' it up. Can't get out of the habit, like. An' I've noticed that if one o' them kind o' people gets a cold or a headache, he's the one to hop into bed an' send for a doctor. Another thing, too! What's a wife but a habit? First of all, she's sort o' worshiped by man; then she becomes a friend, like; but you look at a man married three or four years, an' if his wife ain't a habit more'n she's anything else, well! If she goes away for a day or two, does he miss her? 'Course he does. So he misses his pipe or his half-pint if he's suddenly cut off 'em. Mark yer, too, lots of people would rave like mad if it was put to 'em, but if th'd speak the truth which it's as well for them they don't, they'd say I was quite right."

Ginger glanced at Potty.

"I've often thought," said he, darkly, "that a place where a general swap o' wives could be made now an' then would be very handy."

"What?" said Pinch.

His face glowed with fury and his eyes blazed disgust at Ginger's calm and philosophic suggestion.

"What?" he repeated, and after a struggle for breath—"You!—"

Words failed him, and with a stupendous effort he subsided into silence.

"A chap could make the swap directly he begins to find his wife a habit," continued Ginger.

Pinch gradually resumed an appearance of sanity as he realized he was being chaffed.

"Ah, said he mopping his brow, "yer didn't exactly see what I meant. I was talkin' general, not pussonal."

Herein is food for thought and self-analysis.

"Rummest thing about love," said Bill Jones, "seein' as we're talkin' about it—is the idea chaps get into their heads directly they catch it; the idea as nobody else ever knew anything at all about it. Think they've discovered America ev'ry time."

"Woman!" broke in Tom; "the only way to keep woman in her place is to let her see yer don't think much of her—even if yer do. Let her see yer think she's an inferior, which she is, an' nine cases out o' ten she'll think you're right, an' treat you with proper respect."

There was a pause. Pinch was mentally distilling wisdom from the unforced impressions of a life's experience.

"You're wrong, Tom," said he, finally; "quite wrong. Women, for some extraordinary reason, always do try to be what men thinks 'em, as you say, but the better opinion men have of 'em, they more they think o' themselves, so, yer see, we should always think the best of 'em, so as to give 'em a chance. 'Course, it's sometimes very hard, but it never does no harm to try."

Tom, with the rashness of a bachelor, ventured to affirm that it was impossible for anybody in a sane state to hold an exalted opinion of women, postulating that the only attitude permissible was sincere pity because they were women.

"Look here, young man," said Pinch severely, "I can see very well that you're going to have a horrible surprise one of these days, and I lay six to four as you'll be the most henpecked chap in the neighborhood. And I don't mind telling you, confidential, that it'll serve you right. There's only one thing love can't stand," he added, gloomily, "and that's henpecking."

Mr. Nutts had been quietly observing Tom, and had decided that his prejudice against love was far too emphatic to be genuine. He bent toward Tom.

"Believe me, sir," said he, with dignity, "you treat these matters too lightly. Excessive misogyny indicates an unbalanced intellect."

Fortunately Tom did not understand this.

"Love," continued Mr. Nutts musingly, "supplies the only reasonable basis we have for belief in Paradise. Love, that ethereal, spiritual ecstasy that touches us sometimes when the mind quits the slumbering, quiescent body, and—and—well, in old times love was an art, a science, a thing to be studied; it was even a business with some of the old soothsayers. Why, sir, in my library at home I have a parchment containing the actual receipt for that wonder-working draught that made the gallants of Queen Elizabeth's court invincible to love, that made feminine hearts fall to them in scores, that brought unwilling maids willingly to their feet in adoration. See the local press of the period."

"Fancy them silly old guys believing in stuff like that," said Tom. A note of anxiety crept into his voice. "What nonsense it is now, ain't it?" He gazed at Mr. Nutts appealingly.

Mr. Nutts looked sad.

"Sir," said he, "the efficacy of the love philtre has been an article of faith from time immemorial. I would not readily discredit that which has

"Quite So! Quite So!" Said Mr. Nutts, Gravely.

been believed in so long. I have never prepared that magic draught, 'twould be a thankless task in an age of disbelief, and for myself I have trusted to those charms which prodigal Nature has seen fit to bestow. Heigho! Sirs, I have the honor to bid you good-night. I feel strangely moved. The moon is at its full, and my spirit feels a call to the empyrean heights. Fare thee well, good sirs."

He went out. They looked at each other doubtfully.

"He's mad," said Pinch, and the diagnosis was accepted.

Tom looked troubled.

"I wonder if he knows his way home?"

Bill Jones chuckled. He had a larger acquaintance with Mr. Nutts than had the others.

"I shouldn't worry," he said.

Tom, however, went outside. He found Mr. Nutts a few yards away, standing still, with his face upturned to the moon.

"Look here," said Tom, "I suppose that's all rot about this stuff you spoke about, ain't it?"

Mr. Nutts shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows?" said he. "I have the recipe that is all."

"How much would it cost?" inquired Tom, cautiously.

"A few paltry dollars," said Mr. Nutts, with a fine, disdainful gesture. "And, of course, it might not act. But it would certainly be interesting scientifically."

"Ah," said Tom, adopting the suggestion, "I'm very much interested in that. Look here. Here's five dollars. Make some up, and let's have it. You see, it might be a handy thing to have in the house."

"Quite so! Quite so!" said Mr. Nutts gravely.

Tom trotted back to the shelter and Mr. Nutts smiled at the moon.

### Found the Right Man.

Rudyard Kipling spent a winter in Washington some years ago. One day he was found peering around in the corridors of the state, war and navy building. "What is it, Mr. Kipling?" a man who knew him asked. "I want to find the person who knows most about steam engineering." They referred him to Chief Engineer Melville, the great steam expert. "What is it?" asked Melville, after Kipling had been introduced. "I want to find the man who knows most about steam engineering." "'Jim' Perry's your man," said Melville, and he gave Kipling a card to Perry. Kipling went down to see Perry, talked with him for half a day and then wrote his story, "Between the Devil and the Deep Sea."

### No Need of a Change.

She—"No, Jack, I'm afraid it's impossible. We should never get on well together. You know I always want my own way so much." He—"Well, that's all right. You could go on wanting it after we were married."—Pick Me Up.

## FREAK STATUARY TO ORDER.

### Sculptor Tells of Queer Orders Given Him by His Patrons.

A sculptor was talking about freak statuary. "I turn out a lot of it," he said. "Not that I like to. I have to. So many of our millionaires have uncouth tastes. I made last fall portrait busts of a western millionaire and his wife. The wife wears spectacles, and nothing would do but I must put spectacles on her bust. I argued, but in vain. That bust stands in the millionaire's spacious library to-day and spectacles rest on its nose. I did last month a bust in colors, a bust of a young girl. The marble hair I gilded, the marble eyes I painted blue, and the marble lips and cheeks I flecked with red. A hideous thing, yet the family was immensely pleased. The freakiest of my freak statues stands in a Boston garden. It is the statue of the owner's grandfather, an old Presbyterian divine. The aged man stands in the center of a bed of jonquils, and out of the top of his plug hat a jet of water spurts, falling into a marble basin that he holds in his hands, a basin wherein swim half a dozen goldfish. The idea of treating one's grandfather like that!"

## HAD PREPARED FOR ORDEAL.

### Christening Rehearsal Struck Clergyman as New Idea.

"These college girls," said a clergyman, as he gazed at the white and superb ranks of beautiful graduates, "are a boon to the race. They introduce new ideas. I christened the other day the first baby of a married college girl. Now, babies usually cry while they are being christened, but this one was as quiet as a lamb. Throughout the ceremony it smiled up beautifully into my face. 'Well, madam,' said I to the young wife at the christening's end, 'I must congratulate you on your little one's behavior. I have christened more than 2,000 babies, but I never before christened one that behaved so well as yours.' The young mother smiled demurely. 'No wonder he behaved well,' she said. 'His father and I, with a pail of water, have been practicing christening on him for the last ten days.' The idea of rehearsing a baby for a christening! Who but a college girl would think of such a thing?"

### Irreverent Yankee.

Adam Engel, a few days before he closed his historic chop house in Herald square, lunched with a Denver correspondent. "The loss of this chop house will be a great loss to New York," said the correspondent. "It will be like," he went on eloquently, "the obliteration of some historic light." "I hope," said the modest Engel, "that it won't be so bad as that. Speaking of lights, by the way, I hope that my chop house's departure won't inflict any such loss as a certain Yankee, by an uncontrollable impulse, once inflicted on a Buddhist temple in Japan. They say, you know, that a priest, showing this Yankee over an ancient shrine, led the man reverently to a small silver lamp. 'This lamp, sir,' he said, 'has not been extinguished for seven centuries.' The Yankee puffed out his cheeks and blew. 'Well,' he said, 'I guess she's out now, anyway.'"

### Provocation Enough.

A deaf old gentleman dined with a family where grace was always said. When the guests were seated the host bowed his head and began to repeat the accustomed verse in a subdued, reverent tone. "Eh? What's that?" demanded the deaf old gentleman, who sat beside him. The host smiled patiently and began again, in a louder, more deprecatory voice. "Speak a little louder. I don't catch what you say," the old gentleman persisted. A low ripple of laughter went round the table. The host, his face crimson with embarrassment, raised his voice and repeated the verse. The deaf gentleman did his best to hear, but failed. He placed one hand upon his host's arm. "What did you say?" he demanded irascibly. The host cast him an angry glance. "D—n it, I'm saying grace," he snapped.—Lippincott's Magazine.

### "Beauty Doctors" Copy Old Rome."

Juvenal, the Roman satirist, writes indignantly of the absurd waste of time given to the care of the complexion, of the lotions and jellies and powders for the preservation of the skin. "But anything overlaid with so many oft-changed cosmetics, and a poultice with flour, both baked and boiled, shall we call it a face or a sore? This thing, swollen and ridiculous, the unfortunate husband has to contemplate—only for her lovers does she wash her skin clean." The modern beauty doctors, writes Mrs. H. W. Nevinson in the Fortnightly Review, have plagiarized their methods from ancient Rome—the massage, the stroking, the oiling—and would be willing to admit that some of the most valuable secrets, including the "Roman mask," which eradicated wrinkles, are lost to them.

### Easily Adjusted.

Chairman Knapp of the interstate commerce commission, told in New York the other day a French railway story. "A traffic manager," he said, "came to the president of the line and exclaimed disconsolately: 'We are having no end of trouble with the public, sir, about those old dark blue cars. Everybody says they bump so frightfully in comparison with the new light blue ones, which, of course, run very smooth.' 'Humph,' said the president; 'we must attend to this matter at once. Have all the old cars painted light blue immediately.'"